



*The Scottish Gypsies—Charles Faa {aka Vaw} Blythe Coronation (1898)*

*See below: Keepers of the Hill of Vaws {aka Faas}*

## **THE THREE KINGS OF COLOGNE.**

### **A CHRISTMAS TALE FROM AN OLD ENGLISH CHRONICLE.**

**Written by John of Hildesheim in the Fourteenth Century.**

**Historia Trium Regum (History of the Three Kings) ~ by John of Hildesheim  
(1310/1320 - 1375)**

[<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/18720/18720-h/18720-h.htm>]

{Selection, edition & notes : Rafael Andres Escribano}

Here followeth the manner and form of seeking and offering; and also of the burying and translations {i.e. geographical movements} of the three Holy and Worshipful Kings of Cologne: JASPAR, MELCHIOR, and BALTHAZAR.

Now when the Children of Israel were gone out of Egypt and had won and made subject to them Jerusalem and all the land lying about, so that no man durst set against them in all that country for dread that they had of them; then was there

a little hill called VAWS, which was also called THE HILL OF VICTORY, and on this hill THE WARD OF THEM OF IND WAS ORDAINED AND KEPT BY DIVERSE SENTINELS by night and by day AGAINST THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, and afterward AGAINST THE ROMANS; so that if any people at any time purposed with strong hand to enter into THE COUNTRY OF THE KINGDOM OF IND, anon, sentinels of other hills about, through tokens, warned THE KEEPERS ON THE HILL OF VAWS. And by night they made a great fire and by day they made a great smoke, for THAT HILL VAWS PASSETH THE HEIGHT OF ALL OTHER HILLS IN ALL THE EAST. Wherefore, when any such token was seen, then all manner of men made ready to defend themselves from the enemy that approached.

Now in the time when BALAAM prophesied of THE STAR THAT SHOULD BETOKEN THE COMING OF CHRIST, all the great lords and all the other people of Ind and in the East desired greatly to see the Star of which he spake, and gave gifts to THE KEEPERS OF THE HILL OF VAWS, and moreover hired them with great rewards, that, if it so were, they saw by day or by night, far or near, any light or any star in the air other than was seen beforetime, anon, they should show and send them word. And thus was it that for so long a time the fame of this Star was borne through all the lands of the East; until, of the name of the hill of Vaws, arose up A WORSHIPFUL AND A GREAT KINDRED IN [THE LAND OF] IND, which is called THE PROGENY OF VAWS even unto this day; and THERE IS NOT A MORE MIGHTY KINDRED IN ALL THE KINGDOMS OF THE EAST; for THIS WORSHIPFUL KINDRED CAME FIRST FROM THE KING'S BLOOD THAT WAS NAMED MELCHIOR, that offered gold to our Lord, as ye shall hereafter learn.

In the year of our Lord 1200, when the CITY OF ACON, that in this country is called AKERS, flourished and stood in virtue, joy, and prosperity, and was inhabited richly with worshipful princes, and lords, and diverse orders of men of religion, and all manner of men of all nations and tongues, so that there was NO CITY LIKE UNTO IT IN NOBILITY AND MIGHT; then, because of its great name and of the marvels that were there, the greatest of birth that were of the progeny of Vaws came out of Ind unto Acon; and when they saw there all things more wonderful than in Ind; then, because of delight, they abode there and made a fair and strong castle for any king or lord. And they brought with them out of the East many rich and wonderful ornaments and jewels. And among all other

jewels, they brought A DIADEM OF GOLD ARRAYED WITH PRECIOUS STONES AND PEARLS, and about its edge stood LETTERS OF CHALDAIC, AND A STAR made like AFTER THE STAR THAT APPEARED TO THE THREE KINGS OF THE EAST WHEN THEY SOUGHT GOD, with A SIGN OF THE CROSS, beside. And THAT DIADEM WAS MELCHIOR'S, KING OF NUBIA AND OF ARABY, that OFFERED GOLD TO THE BABE IN THE MANGER. And afterward THE MASTER OF THE ORDER OF THE TEMPLARS received this same diadem of gold and many other precious jewels; but when that Order was destroyed the diadem and precious ornaments were lost, and have NEVER BEEN FOUND UNTO THIS DAY. Wherefore there was great sorrow made in all the country for a long time after.

But THESE SAME PRINCES OF VAWS brought with them out of Ind BOOKS WRITTEN IN HEBREW AND CHALDAIC, concerning the life and deeds of these three blessed Kings, which books were AFTERWARD TRANSLATED INTO THE FRENCH TONGUE: and so, from these books, and from hearsay, and sight, and also from sermons and homilies out of diverse other works, the story here written hath been brought together into one book.

And you shall understand that THE OLD KINDRED OF VAWS beareth always in its banner, unto this day, A STAR WITH A SIGN OF THE CROSS, made AFTER THE SAME MANNER AS IT APPEARED TO THE THREE BLESSED KINGS.

Now it so happened that AFTER BALAAM HAD PROPHESED OF THIS STAR, the more it was sought for the more ITS FAME INCREASED THROUGH THE LAND OF IND AND CHALDEE, and ALL THE PEOPLE DESIRED TO SEE IT.

SO THEY ORDAINED TWELVE OF THE WISEST AND GREATEST CLERKS OF ASTRONOMY that were in all that country about, and gave them great hire TO KEEP WATCH UPON THIS HILL OF VAWS FOR THE STAR that was PROPHESED OF BALAAM. And the cause that there were ordained twelve men was, that if one man died another should be put in his stead; and also that some should keep watch at one time and some another—nevertheless the people looked not only AFTER THE STAR, but AFTER THE MAN WHO WAS BETOKENED BY THE STAR, the which Man should be LORD OF ALL FOLK.

And they of Ind and Chaldee who came often into Jerusalem because of merchandise and also for disport—the which, for the most part, be learned in

astronomy—said that in Ind were many stars in the firmament that might not be seen by night in Jerusalem; but, specially on this hill of Vaws in clear weather, were seen many and diverse strange stars that at the foot of the hill were not seen. Yet this hill of Vaws hath no more breadth than A LITTLE CHAPEL is made upon, the WHICH THE THREE WORSHIPFUL KINGS DID BUILD OF STONE AND TIMBER. And there be about this hill many steps upon which men go up to the chapel on high, and also THERE GREW MANY GOOD TREES AND HERBS AND DIVERSE SPICES ALL ABOUT THE HILL [OF VAWS]—for else, men might not well go upon this hill because it is SO HIGH AND SO NARROW. There is also A PILLAR OF STONE ABOVE THIS CHAPEL, of wondrous height, AND IN THE HEAD OF THE PILAR STANDETH A GREAT STAR, well MADE OF GILT, and WHICH TURNETH WITH THE WIND AS A VANE: and through the light of the sun by day, and of the moon by night, this star gives light a great way about the country. And MANY OTHER MARVELS ARE SPOKEN OF THIS HILL OF VAWS, the which were long to tell.

Now when THE TIME OF GRACE WAS COME, that GOD would have mercy on all mankind, in which time the FATHER OF HEAVEN sent down HIS SON TO TAKE FLESH AND BLOOD and to BE BORN A MAN FOR SALVATION OF ALL THE WORLD: in that time OCTAVIANUS, that was EMPEROR OF ROME, sent out a commandment that all the people within his empire should be counted and taxed; and every man went forth from his dwelling-place into his native country. Then came JOSEPH up from Nazareth unto BETHLEHEM the city of David, because he was of the household and race of King David, and with him came MARY that was his wife, and also great with child.

And you shall understand that Bethlehem was never of much reputation, neither a place of great quantity. It hath a good site and good ground, for there be many caves and dens under the earth thereabout; and it is distant from Jerusalem but two little miles; and it is but a castle, but is called a city because King David was born there. And in that town was sometime A HOUSE WHICH BELONGED TO ISAI, the FATHER OF DAVID, WHERE DAVID WAS BORN AND ANOINTED into the kingdom of Israel by Samuel the prophet. And IN THIS SAME DWELLING WAS THE SON OF HEAVEN BORN OF MARY.

And this same house was at the end of a street that was in that time called THE COVERED STREET, because, to keep out the great heat and burning of the sun,

this street was canopied above with black cloths and other things,—for such is the use in that country always. And here was wont to be great bargaining, or a fair once a week of old clothes; and specially of trees or timber, by the little house which stood before a den under the earth, made and shaped like a little cellar, where Isai and others that dwelt there after him put certain necessities that belonged to the household, against the heat of the sun. It is also the manner in all that country that there be certain houses, the which be called there **ALCHAN**, that we call **HOSTELRIES**, and in these houses be mules, horses, asses, and camels always ready, that, if so that any merchant or any man that travelled by the way, be it far or near, need any beast for himself, or for his merchandise, then he goeth to such a house and there he may hire a horse, or what beast that he will, for a certain price. And when he hath such a beast then he goeth from that city to another, where to abide and rest him for a time. Then he dischargeth his beast of his burden, and so sendeth him to a house called there also **alchan**; and the master of the house giveth his beast meat, and, when he may, he sendeth it home to the same place that it came from.

And such a house was, before the birth of Christ, in the place where Christ was born; but, **ABOUT THE TIME OF THE NATIVITY, THAT HOUSE WAS ALL DESTROYED**, insomuch that there was **NOTHING LEFT BUT BROKEN WALLS ON EVERY SIDE, AND A LITTLE CAVE UNDER EARTH**, and a little unthrifty house before the cave: and there men sold bread on the same ground; for it is the usage in all that country that all the bread that is sold shall be brought unto a certain place.

Now when Octavianus had sent out a commandment as it is aforesaid, then went Joseph and Mary riding on an ass, late in the eventide, toward the city of Bethlehem, and because they came so late, and all places were occupied with pilgrims and other men, and also because they came in poor array and went about the city, none would receive them, and specially, men say, because that Mary, a young woman, sitting upon an ass, heavy and sorry, and full weary of the way, was near to the time of bearing of her child. Then Joseph led his wife into this shed that none took keep of, down into the little dark house, **AND THERE OUR LORD, JESUS CHRIST, the same night was BORN OF THE VIRGIN**, without any disease or sorrow of her body, **FOR SALVATION OF ALL MANKIND**.

And in that house, before the cave of old time, was left a manger of the length of

a fathom, made in the wall; and to that same manger was an ox of a poor man tied, that none might harbor. And beside that ox Joseph tied his ass, and in that same manger Mary wrapped her blessed Son in cloths and laid Him on high before the ass and the ox,—for there was none other place.

And SHEPHERDS were fast by in the same country keeping their sheep in the night, and AN ANGEL OF HEAVEN CAME AND STOOD BESIDE THEM WITH A GREAT LIGHT, wherefore they were in much dread. And the angel said to them, "Be not afraid, for I tell you a great joy that shall be to all people, for this day is born to us our Lord, Christ, in the city of David, and this shall be to you a token: Ye shall find a young child wrapped in cloths and put in a manger." And then suddenly there came A GREAT MULTITUDE OF ANGELS OF HEAVEN PRAISING GOD, who said: "JOY BE TO GOD ON HIGH AND PEACE IN EARTH TO MEN OF GOOD WILL."

Now THE PLACE WHERE THE ANGEL APPEARED TO THE SHEPHERDS THAT NIGHT WHEN CHRIST WAS BORN is but half a mile from Bethlehem, and IN THAT SAME PLACE DAVID, WHEN HE WAS A CHILD, FED SHEEP AND KEPT THEM FROM THE BEAR AND THE LION.

Some books say that the shepherds in that country, twice in the year, are wont to keep their sheep in the night, and, therein, times be when the day and the night are both of one length. And you shall understand that the land about Bethlehem is all mountainous for the most part, so that in some places a man shall not well know winter from summer, and in some places it is right cold, and some it is both winter and summer at one time, and sometimes on the mountains, in parts of the East, men shall find snow in the month of August, and that snow is gathered by them that dwell about, and put in caves, and afterward it is borne to the market, where the great lords of the country will buy it, and take it to their houses, and set it in a basin upon their board to make their drink cold.

In September and October, when the sun cometh a little low in that country, then seeds and all manner of herbs commonly begin to wax in the fields, as in this country herbs begin to grow in March and April; also in some parts of the East they reap corn in April and in March, but most in May, as in some places the ground is higher, in some places lower; but beside Bethlehem are many more places of good pasture and of flat ground than elsewhere: insomuch that at

Christmas-tide barley beginneth to ear and to wax ripe; and then men send thither, from diverse countries, their horses and mules, to make them fat: and that time we call among us CHRISTMAS, they call, in their language, the TIME OF HERBAGE. And forasmuch as when Christ was born, peace was in all the world, and betwixt Bethlehem and that place where the angel appeared to the shepherds was but half a mile and a little way more, and also there was no great cold thereabout, therefore the shepherds, all that winter night and day, now in one place, now in another, dwelled there with their sheep, and so they do yet to this day.

Now WHEN CHRIST WAS BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY FOR SALVATION OF ALL MANKIND, then HIS STAR, that was PROPHESED OF BALAAM and LONG AWAITED AND LOOKED FOR BY THE TWELVE ASTRONOMERS ON THE HILL OF VAWS, AT THAT SAME NIGHT [THAT MARY GAVE BIRTH TO CHRIST] AND AT THAT SAME HOUR, BEGAN TO ARISE IN THE MANNER OF A SUN, bright shining; and so after, IN THE FORM OF AN EAGLE, it ASCENDED ABOVE THE HILL OF VAWS. And all that day in highest air it abode WITHOUT MOVING, insomuch THAT WHEN THE SUN WAS MOST HOT AND MOST HIGH THERE WAS NO DIFFERENCE IN SHINING BETWIXT THEM.

But when the day of the Nativity was passed, THE STAR ASCENDED UP INTO THE FIRMAMENT, and it was NOTHING LIKE TO STARS THAT BE PAINTED IN DIVERSE PLACES, for it had right MANY LONG STREAKS AND BEAMS, MORE BURNING AND LIGHTER THAN A BRAND OF FIRE; and, AS AN EAGLE FLYING AND BEATING THE AIR WITH HIS WINGS, right SO THE STREAKS AND BEAMS OF THE STAR STIRRED IT ABOUT. And IT HAD IN ITSELF THE FORM AND LIKENESS OF A YOUNG CHILD, and ABOVE HIM A SIGN OF THE HOLY CROSS, and A VOICE WAS HEARD IN THE STAR, SAYING: "THIS DAY IS BORN TO US THE KING OF JEWS THAT FOLK HAVE AWAITED, AND LORD IS OF THEM. GO AND SEEK HIM AND DO HIM WORSHIP!"

Then ALL THE PEOPLE, both man and woman, OF ALL THE COUNTRY ABOUT, when they SAW THIS WONDERFUL AND MARVELLOUS STAR and also HEARD THE VOICE OUT OF THE STAR, were greatly aghast and had wonder thereof; but yet THEY KNEW WELL THAT IT WAS THE STAR THAT WAS PROPHESED BY BALAAM, and long time was desired of all the people in that country.

Now when THE THREE WORSHIPFUL KINGS who in that time reigned in IND, CHALDEE, and PERSIA were informed, by the astronomers, of this Star, they were right glad that they had grace to see the Star in their days. Wherefore THESE THREE WORSHIPFUL KINGS, THOUGH EACH OF THEM WAS FAR FROM THE OTHER, AND NONE KNEW OF THE OTHER'S PURPOSE, yet IN THE SAME HOUR THE STAR APPEARED TO ALL THREE, and then they ordained and purposed them, with great and rich gifts and many rich and diverse ornaments that belong to a king's array, and also WITH MULES AND CAMELS AND HORSES CHARGED WITH TREASURE, and WITH A GREAT MULTITUDE OF PEOPLE, to go SEEK AND WORSHIP THE LORD AND KING OF THE JEWS THAT WAS NEW BORN, AS THE VOICE OF THE STAR HAD COMMANDED. And furthermore they arrayed themselves the much more honestly and worshipfully, because THEY KNEW WELL THAT HE WAS A WORTHIER KING THAN ANY OF THEM WAS.

And you shall understand that THERE BE THREE INDIAS, OF WHICH THESE THREE LORDS WERE KINGS; AND ALL THE LANDS FOR THE MOST PART ARE ISLANDS, and there are also there great waters and wildernesses full of wild and perilous beasts and horrible serpents, and there grow also reeds so high and so great that men make thereof houses and ships. AND THESE ISLES ARE DIVIDED EVERY ONE BY ITSELF FAR FROM THE OTHERS, SO THAT ONLY WITH GREAT TRAVAIL SHALL A MAN PASS FROM ONE KINGDOM TO ANOTHER.

Now, IN THE FIRST IND WAS THE LAND OF NUBIA, and therein reigned KING MELCHIOR, in the time that Christ was born. THEREIN ALSO IS THE LAND OF ARABY, in which is the hill SINAI: and a man may lightly sail by the Red Sea out of Egypt and Syria into Ind. In this land is found GOLD wonderfully red, like thin and small roots, and that gold is the best that is in the world. Herein is also a hill called BENA, where is found a precious stone, called smaragd.

IN THE SECOND IND was the kingdom of GODOLIA, of which BALTHAZAR was king when Christ was born; and this Balthazar offered INCENSE to the Babe; FOR IN THIS LAND MANY MORE GOOD SPICES GROW THAN IN ALL THE COUNTRIES OF THE EAST, and ESPECIALLY INCENSE, MORE THAN IN ALL PLACES OF THE WORLD; and it droppeth down out of certain trees in the



manner of gum.

IN THE THIRD IND was the kingdom of THAARS. Of that kingdom was JASPAR king at the birth of Christ. And Jaspar offered MYRRH to the young Child, and in this land is THE ISLE OF EGRISOULLA, where groweth MYRRH MORE PLENTIFULLY THAN IN ANY PLACE OF THE WORLD, and IT WAXETH LIKE EARS OF CORN THAT ARE BURNT WITH THE WEATHER, AND RIGHT THICK; and WHEN IT IS RIPE IT IS SO SOFT THAT IT CLEAVETH TO MEN'S CLOTHES AS THEY GO BY THE WAY.

Now when these three worshipful Kings were passed forth out of their kingdoms, THE STAR EVENLY WENT BEFORE EACH KING AND HIS PEOPLE, AND WHEN THEY STOOD STILL AND RESTED THE STAR STOOD STILL, AND WHEN THEY WENT FORWARD AGAIN THE STAR ALWAYS WENT BEFORE THEM IN VIRTUE AND STRENGTH, AND GAVE LIGHT ALL THE WAY. And, as it is written before, IN THE TIME THAT CHRIST WAS BORN THERE WAS PEACE IN ALL THE WORLD, wherefore IN ALL THE CITIES AND TOWNS WHICH THEY WENT THROUGH THERE WAS NO GATE SHUT NEITHER BY NIGHT NOR BY DAY; and all men of the cities and towns that these worthy Kings went through in the night were wonderfully aghast and passingly marvelled thereof, for they saw kings and vast multitudes go by in great haste; but they knew not what they were, nor whence they came, nor whither they should go. On the morrow the way was greatly befouled with horses' hoofs, whereof they were in much doubt what it might mean, and great altercation was among them for a long time.

Furthermore, these Kings rode forth over hills, waters, valleys, plains, and other diverse and perilous places without hindrance or disease, for all the way seemed to them plain and even, and THEY NEVER TOOK SHELTER BY NIGHT NOR BY DAY; NOR EVER RESTED; NOR DID THEIR HORSES OR OTHER BEASTS EVER EAT OR DRINK TILL THEY HAD COME TO BETHLEHEM; and ALL THIS TIME SEEMED TO THEM BUT A DAY.

And thus, through the mercy of God and the leading of the Star, they came unto Jerusalem and Bethlehem THE THIRTEENTH DAY AFTER CHRIST WAS BORN, at the uprising of the sun, whereof is no doubt: for they found Mary and her son in the same place where the Child was born, and laid in the manger.

But when the three blessed Kings, with their host and company were almost come to Jerusalem, saving but two miles, THEN A GREAT AND DARK CLOUD HELD ALL THE EARTH, AND IN THAT DARK CLOUD THEY LOST THE STAR. And MELCHIOR with his people was come fast by Jerusalem beside the hill of CALVARY, where Christ was afterward crucified; and there the King abode in a cloud of fog and in darkness.

At that time the hill of Calvary was a rock of twelve degrees high, where thieves and other men for diverse trespasses were put to death; and there was beside this hill a place where three highways met together. But because of the darkness of the cloud, and also because they knew not the way, they abode there, and went no further at that time.

And next came BALTHAZAR, and he ABODE UNDER THE SAME CLOUD, beside the MOUNT OF OLIVES in a little town that is called GALILEE.

Then, when the two Kings were come to these places, the cloud began to ascend and wax clear, yet the Star appeared not. But when they saw that they were near to the city of Jerusalem, knowing not each other, they took their way thither with all their folk; and when they came where the three ways met, THEN ALLSO APPEARED KING JASPAR WITH ALL HIS HOST. And SO THESE THREE GLORIOUS KINGS, each with his host and burdens and beasts, MET TOGETHER IN THE HIGHWAY BESIDE THE HILL OF CALVARY. And, NOTWITHSTANDING THAT NONE OF THEM EVER BEFORE HAD SEEN THE OTHER, NOR KNEW HIM, NOR HAD HEARD OF HIS COMING, YET, at their meeting, EACH ONE WITH REVERENCE AND JOY KISSED THE OTHER. And THEY WERE OF DIVERSE LANGUAGE, YET ALL, SEEMING, USED THE SAME TONGUE.

So, afterward, when they had spoken together and each had told his purpose and the cause of his journey, and the cause of all was learned to be the same, then they were much more glad and more fervent. And so they rode forth, and suddenly, at the uprising of the sun, they came into the city of Jerusalem. And when they knew that this was the city which the Chaldeans of old time had besieged and destroyed, they were right glad, expecting to have found the King born in that city. But HEROD and all his people were greatly disturbed at their sudden coming, for their company and beasts of burden were of so great a number that the city might not receive them, but for the most part they lay

without the gates all about, WHEREOF ISAIAS PROPHESED: "The strength of folk cometh to thee—that is to say, to the City of Jerusalem—great plenty of camels shall do thee service, and dromedaries of Madyan and Effa shall come to thee. All men shall come from Saba, bringing GOLD and INCENSE and SHOWING PRAISE TO GOD."

So, these three worshipful Kings, when they were come into the city, asked of the people concerning the Child that was born; and, when HEROD heard this, he was troubled and all Jerusalem with him, and he gathered together all his princes and priests and asked them where Christ should be born, and they said: "IN BETHLEHEM OF JUDEA." Then Herod privily summoned to him these three Kings, and learned of them the time that the Star appeared, and so sent them forth unto Bethlehem, saying: "Go and inquire busily of this Child, and when you have found Him, come and tell me, that I may go and do Him worship."

Now when these three Kings were informed of the birth of Christ and of the place where He was born, and so were passed out of Jerusalem, THEN THE STAR APPEARED TO THEM AGAIN as it did erst, and went before them till they came to Bethlehem. And fast BY THAT PLACE WERE THE SHEPHERDS to whom the angel appeared with great light, showing them the birth of Christ. AND THE THREE KINGS SPAKE WITH THEM, and when the shepherds saw the Star they run together and told how the angel had appeared to them, and furthermore all that the angel had spoken to them. And THE KINGS WERE WONDROUS GLAD, AND WITH GOOD CHEER HEARD AND TOOK CONSIDERATION OF THE SHEPHERDS' WORDS; and so from witness, and from the words of the shepherds and from the voice of the angel that was heard out of the Star, THEY HAD NO DOUBT OF THE THING. Then anon, when they knew that they were come to Bethlehem, they got down from their horses and changed all their array, and clothed themselves in the best and richest that they had, as kings should be clothed—and always the Star went forth before them.

Now the nearer the Kings came to the place where Christ was born the brighter shined the Star, and they entered Bethlehem the sixth hour of the day. And then they rode through THE COVERED STREET till they came before that little house. AND THERE THE STAR STOOD STILL, AND THEN DESCENDED AND SHONE WOTH SO GREAT A LIGHT THAT THE LITTLE HOUSE AND THE CAVE WITHIN WERE FULL OF RADIANCE, TILL ANON THE STAR AGAIN

WENT UPWARD INTO THE AIR, AND STOOD STILL ALWAYS ABOVE THE SAME PLACE, YET THE LIGHT EVER REMAINED IN THE HOUSE WHERE CHRIST AND MARY WERE. So as it is said in the Gospel: "They went into the house and found the Child, and fell down and worshipped Him, and offered to Him gifts of gold, myrrh, and incense."

OF THIS EXAMPLE CAME AFTERWARD A USAGE, that IN ALL COUNTRIES OF THE EAST no man should go into the presence of the Sultan, but he brought gold or silver or somewhat else in his hands; and, also, ere he spoke to the Sultan he should kiss the ground, and this is A CUSTOM WHICH IS USED IN ALL THE COUNTRIES OF THE EAST TO THIS DAY. But the Franciscan friars, when they approached the Sultan, offered to him only pears or apples, for they might not touch gold nor silver; and these offerings were received by the Sultan with all reverence and meekness.

Now on the day that the three Kings sought Christ and worshipped Him, He was a little child of thirteen days old, and He was somewhat fat, and lay wrapped in poor clothes in the hay of the manger up to His arms. And Mary, His Mother, as it is written in diverse books, was, in person, fleshy and somewhat brown. In the presence of the three Kings she was covered with a poor white mantle, which she held close before her with her left hand. Her head was concealed altogether, save her face, with a linen cloth; and she sat upon the manger and with her right hand held up the young Child's head. And the Kings worshipped Him and kissed His hand devoutly and laid their gifts beside His head.

BUT WHAT WAS DONE WITH THESE GIFTS, YE SHALL LEARN HEREAFTER.

Now MELCHIOR, that offered GOLD to the Holy Child, was THE LEAST IN STATURE AND PERSON OF THE THREE KINGS. BALTHAZAR, that offered INCENSE, was of a MEDIUM stature; and JASPAR, that offered MYRRH, was MOST in person; whereof is no doubt, for the prophet saith: "Before Him shall fall down ETHIOPS, and His enemies shall lick the earth. They shall come to Thee that betrayed Thee, and they shall worship the steps of Thy feet." And having regard to the stature of men of that time these Kings were right little of person, insomuch that all manner of people marvelled at them. AND THIS SHOWED WELL THAT THEY WERE COME FROM FAR OUT OF THE EAST, FOR THE NEARER TOWARD THE UPRISING OF THE SUN THAT THE MEN WERE BORN,

THE LESS THEY BE OF STATURE AND BE FEEBLER AND MORE TENDER.

And you shall understand that these three Kings brought out of their lands many gifts and rich ornaments which King Alexander left in Ind, in Chaldee, and in Persia; and all the ornaments which Queen Saba found in Solomon's temple, and diverse vessels that were of the king's house and the Temple of God in Jerusalem, which, in the time of its destruction, were borne into their countries by the Persians and Chaldeans, and many other jewels, both gold and silver, and precious stones, brought they with them to offer to Christ. But when they found our Lord laid on high in the manger and in poor cloths, and the Star that gave so great light in all the place, that it seemed as though they stood in a furnace of fire, then these Kings were so sore afraid that, of all the rich jewels and ornaments they brought with them, they chose nothing, when their treasury was opened, but what came first to their hands, for Melchior took a round apple of gold, as much as a man might hold in his hand, and thirty gilt pennies, and these he offered to our Lord. Balthazar took out of his treasury incense; and Jaspar took out myrrh, as it came first, and that he offered, with weeping and tears. And the Kings were so aghast and so devout and fervent in their oblations, that to all the words that Mary said they gave but little consideration, save only that to every King as he offered his gifts she bowed down her head meekly, and said, "DEO GRACIAS:" that is to say, "I thank God."

When these three Kings had thus performed their way and will, and done all things that they came for, then, as mankind asketh and would, they and all their men and beasts began to eat, and drink, and sleep, and betook them to rest and sport all that day in Bethlehem. For, as is said before, THEY HAD NOT EATEN NOR DRUNK DURING THIRTEEN DAYS. And then THEY MEEKLY TOLD TO ALL MEN IN THAT CITY HOW WONDERFULLY THE STAR HAD BROUGHT THEM THITHER FROM THE FURTHEST PART OF THE WORLD.

Now, as the Evangelist saith: A command came to these Kings in their sleep that they should not return again to Herod, and so, by another way, they went home to their kingdoms. BUT THE STAR THAT WENT BEFORE THEM, APPEARED NO MORE. And so these three Kings, that suddenly met together at the Mount of Calvary, RODE HOME TOGETHER WITH GREAT JOY AND HONOR, AND RESTED BY THE WAY AS MEN SHOULD DO.

And they rode through the provinces that HOLOFERNES of old time had traversed with all his hosts, and the people supposed that Holofernes had come again, for AS THEY JOUNEYED INTO ANY TOWN THEY WERE MEEKLY AND WORSHIPFULLY RECEIVED, AND EVENMORE THEY TOLD WHAT THEY HAD SEEN, DONE, AND HEARD, SO THAT THEIR NAME AND PRAISE WERE NEVER AFTER FORGOT. But THE WAY THAT BEFORE HAD TAKEN ONLY THIRTEEN DAYS, THROUGH LEADING OF THE STAR, THEY FOUND NOW TO TAKE TWO YEARS, WHICH WAS ORDAINED, THAT ALL MEN SHOULD KNOW WHAT DIFFERENCE IS BETWEEN GOD'S WORKING AND MAN'S.

Now, when HEROD AND THE SCRIBES heard that the Kings were gone home again, and came not to him as he had bade them, then, of much envy and malice, HE PURSUED THEM A GREAT WAY; and always he found the people bless them, and praise them, and tell of their nobility. Wherefore HEROD BURNT AND DESTROYED ALL THE LAND THAT WAS UNDER HIS POWER WHERE THE KINGS HAD RIDDEN, AND ESPECIALLY THARSIS AND CILICIA, FOR HE CHARGED THEM THAT THEY HAD SUFFERED THE THREE KINGS PRIVILY TO PASS ACROSS THE SEA IN THEIR SHIPS. And Herod's envy was great when he heard how marvellously the Kings had come out of their lands in thirteen days through leading of the Star, and how, afterward, they went home again, without the Star, through guides and interpreters,—yet no man could tell, for wonder, how night and day they passed by; and for this reason THE PAYNIMS, who had no knowledge of Holy Writ, nor of the birth of Christ, CALLED THESE THREE KINGS MAGOS; that is to say, WISE MEN OF THE EAST.

Now, WHEN THE KINGS WERE COME WITH GREAT TRAVAIL TO THE HILL OF VAWS, THEY MADE THERE, as is aforesaid, A FAIR CHAPEL IN WORSHIP OF THE CHILD they had sought. Also THEY MADE A COVENANT TO MEET TOGETHER AT THE SAME PLACE ONCE IN THE YEAR; and there they ordained their burial. Then all the princes and lords and worshipful knights of their kingdoms, hearing of the return of these three Kings, anon rode forth to them with great, solemnity and met them at the place aforesaid, and with meekness and humility received them. And when they heard how wonderfully God had wrought for their Kings, they held them in more reverence, love, and dread forever after.

So, when the Kings had done what they would, they took leave of each other, and each one, with his people, rode home to his own land with great joy.

And when they were come into their own realms, they preached to all the people what they had seen and done on their journey; and they made in their temples a star after the likeness of that which appeared to them, wherefore MANY PAYNIMS LEFT THEIR ERRORS AND WORSHIPPED THE HOLY CHILD. And thus these three worshipful Kings dwelt in their kingdoms in honest and devout conversation UNTIL THE COMING OF ST. THOMAS, THE APOSTLE.

Now, after the three Kings had gone forth from Bethlehem, there began to wax, all about, a great fame for Mary and her Child, and for the Kings of the East. Wherefore, Mary, in dread of persecution, fled out of the little house where Christ was born, and went to another dark cave and there abode; and diverse men and women loved her and ministered to her all manner of necessities. But when she went out of the little house, MARY FORGOT AND LEFT BEHIND HER SMOCK AND THE CLOTHES IN WHICH CHRIST WAS WRAPPED, FOLDED TOGETHER AND LAID IN THE MANGER; and there they were, whole and fresh, in the same place to the time when ST. HELEN, THE MOTHER OF EMPEROR CONSTANTINE, came thither, long after.

Anon so great was grown Mary's fame that SHE DURST NOT ABIDE LONGER THERE FOR DREAD OF HEROD AND THE JEWS, and an angel appeared to Joseph, saying: "Arise, and take the Child and His mother and flee into Egypt, and tarry there till I summon thee, for it is to come that HEROD SHALL SEEK THE CHILD TO SLAY HIM." Then Joseph arose and took the Child and His mother and went INTO EGYPT in the night, and there he remained UNTIL HEROD DIED. And Mary and her Son dwelt in Egypt seven years.

And it is told that BY THE ROAD WHICH MARY JOURNEYED thither and came back again, GREW ROSES, which are called the ROSES OF JERICHO, and THEY GROW IN NO OTHER PLACE. The shepherds of that country, in following their sheep, gather these roses in their season, and sell them to pilgrims, and thus they be borne into diverse lands. And the place where Mary dwelt is now a garden where groweth BALM, and TO EVERY BUSH A CHRISTIAN MAN, among the Sultan's prisoners, is assigned TO PROTECT AND KEEP IT CLEAN; FOR WHEN A PAYNIM KEEPETH THEM, ANON THE BUSHES WAX DRY AND GROW NO MORE. And THIS BALM HATH MANY VIRTUES the which were long to tell; but ALL MEN IN THE EAST BELIEVE TRULY THAT THE PLACE BEARS SUCH A

VIRTUE OF GROWING BALM BECAUSE MARY DWELT THERE SEVEN YEARS,  
AND WASHED AND BATHED HER SON IN ITS WELLS OF WATER.

And as to the gifts which the three Kings gave to Christ: THE THIRTY GILT PENNIES OF MELCHIOR were made of old by Thara, father of Abraham, and Abraham bare them with him when he went on pilgrimage out of the land of Chaldee into Ebron, which was then called Arabia, and there he bought with them a burial-place for himself, his wife, and his children, Isaac and Jacob. In exchange for the same thirty pieces Joseph was sold by his brethren to merchants of Egypt. Afterward, when Jacob died, they were sent to the land of Sheba to buy diverse spices and ornaments for his sepulture, and so they were put into the king's treasury of that land. Then by process of time, in Solomon's reign, the Queen of Sheba offered these thirty gilt pennies, with many rich jewels, in the Temple at Jerusalem; but in the time of Roboam, King Solomon's son, when Jerusalem was destroyed and the Temple despoiled, they were carried to the King of Arabia, and were put into his treasury with other spoils from the Temple.

And Melchior offered these same thirty pieces to Christ, because they were of the finest gold, and the best that he had. But when Mary went into Egypt she lost all the gifts of the three Kings by the way, bound all in one cloth together. And it happened there was a shepherd who had so great an infirmity that no leech might heal him, and all that he had he paid to the leeches to be whole,—yet it might not be. But, on a time, as he went into the fields with his sheep, he found these thirty gilt pennies, with incense and myrrh, bound all in a cloth together, and he kept them privily to himself, until, hearing tell of a holy prophet that healed all men of their infirmities by a word, he came to Christ and prayed Him for grace and help; and, being healed, he offered the gold, and incense, and myrrh to Him with good devotion. And when Christ saw the thirty gilt pennies AND PRECIOUS HERBS He knew them well, and BADE THE SHEPHERD GO INTO THE TEMPLE AND OFFER THEM UPON THE ALTAR.

Now, when the priest saw such oblations laid upon the altar he marvelled much, and took all three things and put them in the common treasury. And afterward, when JUDAS ISCARIOT came into the Temple to make covenant with the Princes of the Law to betray his master, THEY GAVE HIM FOR HIS PAY THE SAME THIRTY PIECES OF GOLD, and for them Judas sold his Master. And after Christ



was crucified, then Judas repented, and went to the Temple and cast down to the Princes of the Law the thirty pieces. And with fifteen of these gilt pennies the Jews bought a field of burial for pilgrims; and THE OTHER FIFTEEN THEY GAVE TO THE KNIGHTS WHO KEPT THE SEPULCHRE OF CHRIST.

And the reason these thirty gilt pennies were called silver in the Gospel, notwithstanding they were fine gold, is, that it is the common usage in that country so to call them, as men in this country call gold from beyond the sea scutys, motouns or florins; moreover in the East the same print is made in gold and silver and copper, and the print on the thirty pieces is this: on one side is a king's head crowned, and on the other are written letters in Chaldaic, which men now cannot read. And many marvels are told of these pieces of gold which were long to tell.

How when OUR LORD was ascended into heaven, then he SENT ST. THOMAS, his apostle, INTO IND, to preach there God's word. And as St. Thomas went about IN THE TEMPLES HE FOUND A STAR IN EVERY ONE, painted after the manner of the Star that appeared to the three Kings when Christ was born, IN WHICH STAR WAS A SIGN OF THE CROSS AND A CHILD ABOVE. And when St. Thomas saw this he asked of the bishops what it was, and THEY TOLD HIM THAT SUCH A STAR OF OLD TIME APPEARED ON THE HILL OF VAWS IN TOKEN OF A CHILD THAT WAS BORN WHO SHOULD BE KING OF THE JEWS, AS WAS HEARD SPOKEN OUT OF THE SAME STAR.

And when ST. THOMAS had preached and taught the people the understanding of this Star and of the Cross and the Child, THEN HE WENT TO THE KINGDOMS OF THE THREE KINGS, AND HE FOUND THEM WHOLE OF BODY AND OF GREAT AGE. And ST. THOMAS CHRISTENED THESE THRE KINGS AND ALL THEIR PEOPLE, AND THE THREE KINGS BEGAN TO PREACH WITH THE APOSTLE, AND WHEN THEY HAD CONVERTED THE PEOPLE TO THE LAW OF CHRIST HE ORDAINED THEM TO BE ARCHBISHOPS. And after this ST. THOMAS WAS SLAIN, and in all that country where he was martyred both men and women have visages shaped like hounds, yet they be not hairy—and they are so unto this day.

Now UNDER THE HILL OF VAWS ST. THOMAS AND THESE THREE KINGS HAD MADE A RICH CITY and called it SEWILL, and THIS CITY IS THE BEST

AND RICHEST IN ALL THE COUNTRY OF IND TO THIS DAY; and therein is the habitation of PRESTER JOHN that is called LORD OF IND, and there dwelleth also the PATRIARCH OF IND who is called THOMAS, in worship of St. Thomas and for an everlasting memorial. And when all things were disposed by these three Kings they went to the city of Sewill, and THERE THEY LIVED TWELVE YEARS.

And a little before the feast of Christ's nativity, when these years were drawn to an end, there appeared a wonderful star above this city and the Kings knew that their time was nigh when they should pass out of this world. Then of one assent they ordained a fair and large tomb for their burial in the church they had made in the city; and in the feast of Christmas they did, solemnly, God's service.

And in the feast of the Circumcision, MELCHIOR, KING OF ARABY, laid him down before all his people and WITHOUT ANY DISEASE YIELDED UP HIS SPIRIT, in the year of HIS AGE ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTEEN. Then in the feast of Epiphany, five days thereafter, BALTHAZAR, KING OF GODOLIE AND SABA, died in the year of HIS AGE ONE HUNDRED AND TWELVE. And then JASPAR the third king, the sixth day after was taken into everlasting joy, and they were all buried in the same tomb that they had ordained; AND THE STAR THAT APPEARED OVER THE CITY BEFORE THEIR DEATH, ABODE ALWAYS TILL THEIR BODIES WERE TRANSLATED ONTO COLOGNE, AS THEY OF IND TELL.

Now after much time had passed, QUEEN HELEN, the mother of the glorious Emperor Constantine, began to think greatly of the bodies of these three Kings, and she arrayed her with certain people and WENT INTO THE LAND OF IND. And she had much praise among the people because of the finding of Mary's smock and the cloths that Christ was wound in in his childhood; and SEEING THAT SHE WAS WORSHIPPED OF ALL PEOPLE, THE PATRIARCH THOMAS AND PRESTER JOHN, took counsel of other lords and princes and GAVE HER THE BODIES OF KING MELCHIOR AND KING BALTHAZAR. But THE NESTORINES HAD BORNE THE BODY OF THE THIRD KING, KING JASPAR, INTO THE ISLE OF EGRISOULLA. And these Nestorines were THE WORST HERETICS OF THE WORLD. For the most part they were BLACK ETHIOPS, WHO PAINTED CHRIST AND HIS MOTHER MARY AND THE THREE KINGS IN THE CHURCHES ALL BLACK, AND THE DEVIL ALL WHITE, IN SPITE OF ALL

OTHER MEN. BUT BECAUSE QUEEN HELEN WISHED NOT THAT THE THREE KINGS SHOULD BE PARTED, SHE MADE MANY PRAYERS AND GAVE GREAT GIFTS TO THE CHIEF LORDS OF THE ISLE OF EGRISOULLA, AND THUS ANON DID SHE GET THE BODY OF KING JASPAR.

And you shall understand that after she had found the bodies of all these three Kings, QUEEN HELEN PUT THEM INTO ONE CHEST AND ARRAYED IT WITH GREAT RICHES, AND SHE BROUGHT THEM UNTO CONSTANTINOPLE WITH JOY AND REVERENCE, AND LAID THEM IN THE CHURCH THAT IS CALLED ST. SOPHIA; and this church King Constantine did make—and he alone, with a little child, set up all the pillars of marble.

Now after the death of this worshipful King Constantine and Queen Helen aforesaid, THERE BEGAN A NEW PERSECUTION OF HERESY AGAINST THE CHRISTIAN FAITH, AND OF DEATH AGAINST THEM THAT WOULD MAINTAIN THE LAW OF CHRIST. THE GREEKS FORSOOK THE CHURCH AND CHOSE A PATRIARCH FOR THEMSELVES, WHOM THEY YET OBEY UNTIL THIS DAY.

Now in this persecution the bodies and the relics of the three holy Kings were put at no reverence, but utterly set at naught. For THE SARACENS AND TURKS AT THIS TIME WON WITH STRONG BATTLE THE LANDS OF GREECE AND ARMENIA, AND DESTROYED A GREAT PART OF THESE LANDS.

THEN CAME AN EMPEROR OF ROME who was called MAURICIUS, and through the help of them of Milan he recovered all these lands again, and, as is said among men in that country, through counsel of this Emperor THE BODIES OF THE THREE KINGS WERE CARRIED UNTO MILAN, and they were there laid with all solemnity and worship in a fair church which is called after ST. EUSTORGIO, because he had asked the bodies from the Emperor, and being granted them had sent them unto Milan.

Then afterward by process of time, it happed that THE CITY OF MILAN BEGAN TO REBEL AGAINST THE EMPEROR, who was called FREDERICK I, and this Emperor sent to the ARCHBISHOP OF COLOGNE, who was called RAINALD, for help. Then this Archbishop, through help of diverse lords of the land of Milan, took the city of Milan and destroyed a great part thereof. And THE CHIEF MEN

OF THE CITY TOOK THE BODIES OF THE THREE KINGS AND HID THEM PRIVILY IN THE EARTH.

Now among all others there was in Milan A LORD NAMED ASSO, and the Emperor hated him more than all the rest of its people. So it happed that in the destruction of the city the Archbishop won Asso's palace through strong hand, and lived therein a great while, for Asso was taken and put into prison.

Then, anon, Asso sent privily by his keepers to the Archbishop of Cologne and prayed him that he would come and speak with him, and it was granted that Asso should go to the Archbishop. And when he was come to him, he prayed him that, if he would get him grace of the Emperor and his love and the restoration of his lordship, HE [ASSO] WOULD GIVE HIM [RAINALD, THE ARCHBISHOP OF COLOGNE] THE BODIES OF THE THREE KINGS.

When the Archbishop heard this, he went to the Emperor and prayed for Lord Asso, and got him grace and love. And when this was done, Asso brought, secretly, the three bodies of the Kings to the Archbishop of Cologne.

Then the Archbishop sent the bodies forth, by private means, a great way out of the city of Milan, whereupon he went to the Emperor anew and prayed him that he would grant him these three bodies, and the Emperor did so with good will. Then the Archbishop openly, with great solemnity and procession, BROUGHT THE THREE HOLY KINGS UNTO COLOGNE, and there put them in the fair CHURCH OF ST. PETER, worshipfully; and all the people of the country, with all the reverence they might, received these holy relics; and there they are KEPT AND BEHOLDEN OF ALL MANNER OF NATIONS UNTO THIS DAY.

THUS ENDETH THE TRANSLATION OF THESE THREE WORSHIPFUL KINGS: MELCHIOR, BALTHAZAR, AND JASPAR.

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